

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS  
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August 26, 1946

SMALLER CROP OF TURKEYS THIS YEAR

Farmers are raising 41,013,000 turkeys this year, 9 percent less than the record crop of last year but 27 percent above the 1938-42 average. This total is a preliminary estimate of turkey production released today by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Producers' intentions on January 1 pointed to a 5 percent decrease in the turkey crop this year. However, the uncertainty of obtaining feed supplies, the higher cost of feed and an uncertain fall market outlook caused many growers to cancel their poult orders and others to reduce the number of poults they had originally intended to buy.

A special report based on May 1 holdings of young turkeys in 25 States indicated the crop in 1946 would be 15 percent smaller than in 1945. The present preliminary estimate is based on a much greater number of reports than in May, these reports covering August 1 holdings of turkeys in all States. This estimate indicates that the 1946 crop will be 3 percent smaller than was intended in January, but 8 percent larger than indicated by May 1 holdings. Loss of poults and young turkeys has been generally less than in 1945, because of the early hatch and favorable growing conditions in most areas this year.

All States except 14 show decreases from last year in number of turkeys raised. Decreases range from 2 percent in Minnesota to 30 percent in Oregon. Increases range from 5 to 10 percent. All States in the North Atlantic area show decreases except New Jersey, which had an 8 percent increase. In the East North Central States, increases in Indiana and Illinois offset decreases in Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin. In the West North Central States, increases in Iowa and North Dakota offset all except 1 percent of the total decrease in all other States in this area. In the South Atlantic States, increases in half the States balanced decreases in the other half. In the South Central States, increases of 5 percent in Tennessee, Alabama and Oklahoma were more than offset by decreases in other States, the region as a whole showing a 4 percent decrease. Heavy decreases in all of the Western States, except Montana and New Mexico, resulted in a 24 percent decrease for the area. Decreases were especially large in Utah and the Pacific Coast States, where a larger proportion of the turkeys are in commercial flocks than in other parts of the country. With a 28 percent decrease in turkeys in California and only a 5 percent decrease in Texas, California was replaced by Texas as the leading turkey State. Minnesota, with a 2 percent decrease, took second place with California third.

The 1946 hatching season began with a record number of breeder hens on farms. The season was especially early, with the supply of early hatching eggs more than large enough to meet the demand from hatcheries. As the season advanced, the feed situation became increasingly difficult and growers began to curtail their purchases of poults. Hatching was also curtailed and a burdensome surplus of hatching eggs soon resulted. Many breeding hens were liquidated, some before they had started to lay. There were plenty of hatching eggs all through the 1946 hatching season, in contrast to the 1945 season when poult production was limited by the supply of hatching eggs. Hatcheries reporting on poults showed a 10 percent decrease in poults hatched during the first 7 months of this year compared with the same months in 1945.

The heaviest reductions in turkeys this year were made by the larger producers. Many small producers and some larger producers in the Midwest, who had adequate feed



supplies on hand, increased their turkey holdings. This tended to offset the decrease in flocks of those who had trouble in obtaining feed supplies and who were forced to hold down the size of their flocks.

### MARKETINGS EARLIEST OF RECORD

Turkey marketings this season are expected to be the earliest in 11 years of record and considerably earlier than last year. If producers carry out their intentions marketings in October or earlier will account for about 25 percent of the crop, compared with the previous high October marketings of about 20 percent last year. The trend toward production of earlier birds from January and February poults is even more striking than it has been during the last 5 years. Flocks of early birds are easier to raise, have smaller death losses and are in less danger of early winter storm losses than later hatched poults.

About three fourths of the early birds are produced in the West North Central and Western States, with Minnesota, Iowa and California leading all States in the production of early birds for the October and November markets. In Utah, where large commercial flocks predominate, producers are going in more for early birds and expect to market almost a third of their 1946 crop in October or earlier. In the Pacific Coast States, where flocks of broad-breasted birds are more numerous and are fed to heavier weights for the freezer market after January 1, there is also a definite trend toward earlier birds and early marketings. Growers in these States expect to market almost a fourth of their 1946 crop in October or earlier, compared with about a sixth so marketed in 1945.

Turkey growers for the country as a whole expect to market about 40 percent of the crop in November this year, compared with 36 percent reported as marketed in November last year. Growers intend to market about 65 percent of the crop by the end of November this year, compared with 56 percent marketed last year. Christmas and New Year markets are expected to receive 26 percent of marketings, compared with 30 percent last year. About 9 percent are intended for the after-holiday market, compared with 14 percent last year.

The actual proportions of the crop that move to market in the successive months will depend to a considerable extent upon later developments. With record crops of wheat and corn in prospect, there should be plenty of feed this fall for feeding out turkeys, and growers will not be forced to market immature or unfinished birds because of a feed shortage. In 1942 and 1943 actual marketings were about the same as intended, while from 1938 to 1941, inclusive, they were somewhat later. In 1944 actual marketings through November were lighter than intended and considerably more birds were held for marketing after January 1. In 1945 actual marketings were about the same as planned in August last year.

The percent of the crop intended for the Thanksgiving market varies from 47 percent in the South Central States to 35 percent in the West. The largest percentage of marketing after the end of the year is 15 percent reported in the West, the smallest is about 3 percent in the West North Central States. Although California is going in for more early birds, she still leads the country in heavy birds marketed after January 1 for the freezer market.

### PROPORTION OF TURKEY CROP MARKETED IN DIFFERENT MONTHS

(Reporters' averages)

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS	1945 Crop				1946 Crop (intended)			
	Oct. or earlier	Nov.	Dec.	Jan. or later	Oct. or earlier	Nov.	Dec.	Jan. or later
	Percent							
N. Atlantic	8.8	41.9	34.9	14.4	10.7	44.4	35.2	9.7
E. N. Central	10.4	40.8	35.2	13.6	17.8	43.7	30.4	8.1
W. N. Central	33.9	37.7	22.8	5.6	41.8	37.0	17.8	3.4
S. Atlantic	17.0	40.6	33.6	8.8	19.1	44.8	29.5	6.6
S. Central	9.6	41.9	34.4	14.1	7.7	46.8	35.1	10.4
Western	17.4	28.8	30.7	23.1	24.5	34.7	26.2	14.6
United States	19.6	36.4	30.0	14.0	24.9	39.6	26.4	9.1



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TURKEYS RAISED ON FARMS 1946 WITH COMPARISONS

State and Division	Number raised						Indicated: 1946 as % of 1945
	Average :	1943 :	1944 :	1945 1/ :	1946 2/ :		
	1938-42 :						
T h o u s a n d s							Percent
Me.	47	43	43	52	44	85	
N.H.	59	64	71	92	75	82	
Vt.	138	142	159	207	186	90	
Mass.	228	216	227	272	250	92	
R.I.	22	26	30	35	31	89	
Conn.	101	117	146	185	163	88	
N.Y.	392	386	428	586	492	84	
N.J.	133	160	192	259	280	108	
Pa.	830	1,071	1,285	1,670	1,586	95	
N. ATL.	1,950	2,225	2,581	3,358	3,107	93	
Ohio	815	851	979	1,155	1,097	95	
Ind.	392	453	612	1,010	1,081	107	
Ill.	562	609	828	1,118	1,230	110	
Mich.	475	519	638	1,002	932	93	
Wis.	439	554	692	761	731	96	
E. N. CENT.	2,683	2,986	3,749	5,046	5,071	100	
Minn.	2,894	2,983	3,341	4,176	4,092	98	
Iowa	1,675	1,867	2,147	2,576	2,731	106	
Mo.	1,416	1,332	1,532	1,838	1,746	95	
N. Dak.	1,434	945	992	1,042	1,146	110	
S. Dak.	1,166	551	413	487	472	97	
Nebr.	1,031	1,140	1,208	1,546	1,469	95	
Kansas	1,151	958	910	1,119	951	85	
W. N. CENT.	10,768	9,776	10,543	12,784	12,607	99	
Del.	111	102	107	123	117	95	
Md.	399	364	400	460	437	95	
Va.	821	857	986	1,232	1,232	100	
W. Va.	227	235	254	330	320	97	
N. C.	235	241	277	360	396	110	
S. C.	146	256	307	460	437	95	
Ga.	115	168	168	202	212	105	
Fla.	113	120	118	142	156	110	
S. ATL.	2,167	2,343	2,617	3,309	3,307	100	
Ky.	302	254	267	299	254	85	
Tenn.	193	200	190	200	210	105	
Ala.	136	170	144	151	159	105	
Miss.	125	129	111	113	96	85	
Ark.	123	126	132	152	137	90	
La.	65	77	69	69	62	90	
Okla.	1,445	954	954	1,145	1,202	105	
Tex.	3,959	3,724	3,761	4,701	4,466	95	
S. CENT.	6,348	5,634	5,628	6,830	6,586	96	
Mont.	268	246	253	253	273	108	
Idaho	238	218	272	340	255	75	
Wyo.	202	167	167	199	169	85	
Colo.	889	861	861	947	814	86	
N. Mex.	60	55	52	60	66	110	
Ariz.	70	89	93	107	91	85	
Utah	864	1,341	1,743	2,039	1,590	78	
Nev.	43	35	40	51	42	83	
Wash.	824	1,206	1,387	1,637	1,310	80	
Oreg.	1,694	2,084	2,084	2,876	2,013	70	
Calif.	3,127	3,704	4,260	5,155	3,712	72	
WEST.	8,279	10,006	11,212	13,664	10,335	76	
U. S.	32,194	32,970	36,330	44,991	41,013	91	

1/ Revised.

2/ Preliminary estimates as of August 1, 1946.

1/ Revised. 2/ Preliminary estimates as of August 1, 1946.



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